

POST-DRAFT ISSUE

Detailed Analysis
Begins On Page 2



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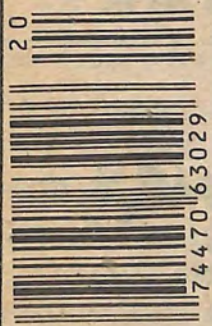
BEAR REPORT

A NEWSPAPER DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE CHICAGO BEARS AND THE NFL.

Vol. 10, No. 28 May, 1986

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A Newspaper Devoted Exclusively
To The Chicago Bears and The NFL

Vol. 10, No. 28 May, 1986

On The Cover...

FIRST-round draft choice Neal Anderson enjoys his initial meeting with the Chicago media. (Bear Report photo by Peter Mitchell)



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Commentary



By
Doug
Buffone



Tobin Does It Again

This draft was to be the ultimate test for Bill Tobin and his scouting staff.

After all, the Bears in recent years had the luxury of always selecting in the top 20 in every round. Most teams can find good players in the early rounds when picking that high. But this year, the Bears had to select last in every round due to their Super Bowl victory. No problem, said Tobin.

SO, THE BEARS didn't have a chance to get Bo Jackson or Tony Casillas. No big deal. They still found plenty of quality players, including first-rounder Neal Anderson, second-round selection Vestee Jackson, and wide receiver Dave Williams, the club's third-round pick out of Illinois.

All three of these players will help the Bears this season and in seasons to come. It's amazing the Bears were able to get a quality back like Anderson as late as the 27th pick in round one. Apparently, Anderson was overshadowed by teammate John L. Williams, who was selected earlier by the Seahawks. Nevertheless, the Bears aren't complaining. Even though Walter Payton is far from retirement, Mike Ditka will find room on the field for Anderson. He is too good a player to get splinters from the bench.

The rap on Jackson is he doesn't have enough speed to cover the swift receivers in the league. That's why he lasted until the end of round 2. But he is still one of the best corners coming out, and played against stiff competition in college. He should

give Reggie Phillips and Ken Taylor a run for their money.

I THINK THE Bears got a real "steal" with Williams on round three. This guy also had his share of critics, but he was an awesome performer under Mike White at Champaign. His story reminds me somewhat of Dan Marino. Remember when the scouts knocked Marino because he had a bad senior year. That's why five quarterbacks were picked ahead of him in the 1983 draft. Look who is laughing now. Williams can be a dominant force in this league. Just imagine him and Willie Gault driving defensive backs crazy.

Paul Blair, the team's fourth-round pick, also is a solid player. The Big Eight always seems to produce solid linemen. Blair could make a capable backup.

I'm happy to see that the Bears went for a specialist with their fifth-round choice, tiny Lew Barnes. This 5-8, 163-pound keg of dynamite is a speedster on punt returns and could give the Bears the gamebreaking player they need.

Other interesting selections are RB Jeff Powell (sixth round) and P John Teltschik (9th round). Despite Maury Buford's fine season, Teltschik is worth looking at.

All in all, it is amazing the Bears found such quality in this draft. As the old saying goes, the rich get richer.

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Detailed Look At the Draft Choices

(In addition to biographical sketches of the Bears' 11 draft choices, the **BEAR REPORT** also includes various comments from the draftees, head coach Mike Ditka, and player personnel director Bill Tobin.)

ROUND ONE — NEAL ANDERSON — running back, Florida — 6-0, 207 — 27th player selected. . . was second to Auburn's Bo Jackson in rushing yards his senior year with 1,034. . . only 8th RB in SEC history to surpass 3,000 yards rushing. . . had season-high 160 yards vs. Tennessee. . . ranks first on Florida's all-time list with 3,234 career yards, 30 rushing TDs, all-time TD list with 32, all-time school list with 14 100-yard games. . . set school record for most rushing yards as a sophomore with 835. . . teammate John L. Williams was selected in first round by Seahawks. . . served as student senator for Florida Student Government. . . public relations/journalism major who will graduate in June.

Anderson: "There are a lot of things Walter (Payton) can help me with. I'll come in and take it slow. No one can play football forever. Not even Walter Payton. I'll wait for my turn to come. . . I can run with power, get short yardage, but also have enough speed to break a long run. That's the biggest plus. Being able to mix it up."

Ditka: "We felt this was that once in a lifetime pick. This could be that special running back that when Walter does hang it up, he could step in and play football for a lot of years. He's a very exciting person, and a very high quality person."

Tobin: "He's got the power and strength Walter had coming out. He's got a little more speed than Walter had coming out of Jackson State. He really doesn't have the quickness in the hole that Walter had, and be able to bounce off a tackler. He's got good hands. . . He's gonna be a player for us for a long time. He doesn't have to start for us right away. That's going to be a luxury."

ROUND TWO — VESTEE JACKSON — cornerback, Washington — 6-0, 186 — 55th player selected. . . three-year starter who recorded 13 career interceptions. . . all-Pac 10 choice in 1985. . . won inaugural most valuable back award. . . longest int. return was 66-yards for TD vs. Arizona. . . played in '85 Hula Bowl. . . had 82 career tackles, 16 passes defended, three tackles for loss.

Jackson: "One of my strengths is pass coverage. The better the competition, the more I enjoy it. . . I probably wouldn't be classified as the most physical player but when the time comes for being physical, I'll be physical. I'm more of a pass coverage specialist."

Ditka: "Jackson filled a significant need. We want to use him as a corner, but if (Ken) Taylor or Reggie (Phillips) comes through at the corner, we could move him (to safety). But I don't see that happening."

Tobin: "We're gonna play him on the corner. Everyone at BLESTO (scouting combine) agreed he's a corner. His major negative is he doesn't have top speed. But he's got very quick feet and a good sense for the game. He catches the ball well, tackles well, supports well. He'll be good competition for Reggie Phillips and the other corners."

ROUND THREE — DAVID WILLIAMS — wide receiver, Illinois — 6-3, 187 — 82nd player selected. . . caught 186

passes in last two years. . . caught 16 passes vs. Purdue for career-high and Big Ten record. . . set school record in '84 with 1,278 receiving yards. . . finished career as NCAA's No. 2 all-time receiver with 245 catches and No. 4 all-time in receiving with 3,195 yards. . . his 7.4 catches per game for a career is 3rd best in NCAA history. . . brother Oliver is former 12th-round choice (1983) of Bears.

Williams: "I play to win. I hate losing. I do whatever it takes to get the job done. God gave me the abilities to perform. When the ball comes my way, I try to catch it and score a touchdown. . . Evidently, some teams think I can't run. That's their opinion. When the season starts, we'll see. You've always got something to prove."

Ditka: "He's got that size you want, and looks a little bit like (Cris) Collinsworth (of the Bengals). He can have that kind of production in time. He's got a long stride, but he runs good routes. He really can catch the ball over the middle, despite taking some shots. He hangs on to the football."

Tobin: "He's not only a control receiver underneath, he can get deep. After many of his catches the last two years, he showed up in the end zone at the end of the play. In the Japan Bowl, he made a big catch (60 yards

for a touchdown)."

ROUND FOUR — PAUL BLAIR — offensive lineman, Oklahoma State — 6-4, 290 — 110th player selected. . . consensus all-Big Eight selection. . . started every game since tail end of OSU won 27 games and two bowl contests during that span. . . is an avid weight lifter and bench presses 400 pounds. . . has gained 50 pounds since high school.

Blair: "At Oklahoma State, we played a Chicago-type offense with a strong ground game, and a strong passing attack. I love to pass block and keep people off balance. . . I thought I would be selected in the second round, but it relit my pilot light when the Bears called. . . It will be a little scary going up against (Dan) Hampton for the first time. It will be a learning experience."

Tobin: "We had a decision to make here. We were looking at an offensive tackle from Illinois State by the name of Jim Meyer. We decided to go with Blair because he's more versatile. He can play guard or center, too. Jim Meyer was strictly an offensive tackle."

ROUND FIVE — LEW BARNES — wide receiver, Oregon — 5-8, 163 — 138th player selected. . . made all-Pac 10 team three times and various All-American teams in

Continued Next Page



TENTH-ROUND DRAFT choice Barton Hundley is a two-time All-Big 8 selection. (Photo courtesy of University of Kansas)

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Draft Choices

Continued From Page 3

'85... established school record with 2,048 career receiving yards... tied school record for most career TD's with 18... caught at least one pass in all 32 games he played... had 5 catches for 49 yards in East-West Shrine Game... dangerous punt returner with 9.9 average... senior year, had 12.5 PR average, one TD.

Barnes: "An overall receiver, I'm pretty good. Size doesn't bother me at all. I'm sure some teams passed me by because of it. I'm going to Chicago to earn a starting position as a wide receiver, but can also help them in the special teams area."

Tobin: "He can be dynamite as a punt returner, and can also return kickoffs. He caught 50 balls last year, so he can double as a wide receiver."

ROUND SIX — JEFF POWELL — running back, Tennessee — 5-10, 170 — 166th player selected... began college at William & Mary before going to Tennessee... never played football until senior year... 235 yards on 55 carries last year for 4.3 average... gained 88 yards on 15 carries vs. Kentucky... also returned kickoffs (7 for 20.7 average).

Powell: "I can be a versatile player. Coach Ditka says they want to try me at wide receiver and running back. I have to show them I not only have speed, but other abilities."

Tobin: "He's strictly a speed pick. (Scout) Rod Graves timed him at 4.33 and 4.35 in the 40. He can be a kickoff returner, wide receiver or halfback."

ROUND SEVEN — BRUCE JONES — safety, North Alabama — 6-1, 195 — 194th player selected... member of Kodak and AP all-America teams... had 10 career interceptions, 98 tackles, 66 assists, 23 passes defended... blocked six punts and scored 1 TD on punt return as a senior... returned int. for touchdowns in consecutive games in 1984.

Jones: "I know I'll have my job cut out for me. They plan to line me up as a free safety behind (Gary) Fencik. I can play any position in the secondary. I'm a pretty good hitter. I can play a support role."

Tobin: "We thought he was the best safety available at the time. He's very productive and had a great college career."

ROUND EIGHT — MAURICE DOUGLASS — defensive back, Kentucky — 5-11, 200 — 222nd player selected... had 3 interceptions in '85 tying him for second on team... led in int. return yards with 57... had two interceptions in two different games... transferred from Coffeyville Community College where he was first team

All-American and member of national and bowl championship teams.

Tobin: "We need him. He's got speed and looks like a halfback. He has a great physique."

ROUND NINE — JOHN TELTSCHIK — punter, Texas — 6-1, 207 — 250th player selected... averaged 45.2 on 58 punts during senior season... career long is 73 yards... is barefoot punter... set single season record with 54.8 mark on 6 punts vs. Texas Tech... had 66-yard punt as freshman, and 67-yard punt as sophomore... all-state punter in high school.

Teltschik: "I've kicked in bad weather a couple of times. I can kick with or without a shoe. By July, it won't matter to me at all... I know I have to be consistent to earn a job. 35-yard line drives won't cut it. I also have to work on my hang time."

Tobin: "He netted nearly 42 yards per punt last year. That's what made him really stand out."

ROUND TEN — BARTON HUNDLEY — defensive back, Kansas State — 5-11, 187 — 278th player selected... all-Big Eight last two seasons... captain of '85 squad... led Wildcats with 6 int. including a 53-yard TD return... had nine career int., 193 tackles, 121 assists, 17 passes defended... made 14 unassisted tackles and returned an int. 25 yards vs. Oklahoma in '84.

Hundley: "I'm an intelligent player. I'll fill in wherever they need me in the secondary. I have played both free safety and strong safety. Reading plays well is my biggest asset."

Tobin: "He's a very tough, physical, aggressive kid."

ROUND ELEVEN — GLEN KOZLOWSKI — wide receiver — Brigham Young — 6-1, 193 — 306th player selected... played in only five games in 1985 due to tearing anterior cruciate ligament in right knee... had surgery in January '86... finished '85 campaign with 23 catches for 436 yards, 2 TDs... caught 55 for 879, 11 TDs as junior... caught 29 passes for 376 yards in 1981 with Jim McMahon at QB... older brother Mike plays safety for Dolphins.

Kozlowski: "I am 75 percent recovered right now and am shooting for 100 percent by start of July training camp... I catch the ball well over the middle or deep. My style of play is aggressive. I just want to be 100 percent so I can display all of my capabilities."

Tobin: "If he hadn't been injured, he would have gone much higher. His grade represented a second or third-round pick. He's got versatility where he might even be a safety. He's got the speed, if he comes off the knee injury well. He can flop to the other side of the ball like Gary Fencik did."



CORNERBACK VESTEE JACKSON

Next Issue

This issue concludes the 10th publishing season of the **BEAR REPORT**. Volume 11 will begin on Monday, July 28 when the annual **TRAINING CAMP ISSUE** is printed. At that time, the **BEAR REPORT** will resume its weekly schedule.

Mini-Camp Nears

All veterans, draft choices and free agents will attend the Bears' mini-camp, which will begin on Tuesday, May 20. Practice sessions, all open to the public, will be held on May 21 (11 a.m. and 3 p.m.), May 22, (11 a.m. and 3 p.m.) and May 23 (11 a.m. and 2 p.m.). All practices will take place on the field behind Halas Hall. Five classroom sessions will also be held during the mini-camp.

"We intend to expose the rookies to our terminology and playbooks," said Ditka. "We want them to come away from the mini-camp with individual strength and conditioning programs to get them ready for training camp. (Trainer) Fred Caito and (strength coordinator) Clyde Emrich will be working with them to tailor summer programs to their individual needs."



ILLINOIS WIDE RECEIVER David Williams, the Bears' third-round draft choice, set many Big Ten receiving records. (Photo courtesy of University of Illinois)

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Anderson Will Be Patient

Neal Anderson sounded like a pretty good player, as long as the Bears can tear him away from visiting orphanages and devouring library books. When coach Mike Ditka and personnel director Bill Tobin described him on draft day, they made Frank Merriwell seem like a scandalous ne'er-do-well.

He did take Tuesdays off from practice. Maybe the guy has a loafing streak after all. Nope. Turns out he missed practice so he could go to class. He carried a full load during the season, and none of the courses were Map Coloring or Leisure and Fitness.

HE'LL GRADUATE IN June with a B average. When he ran for student government at the University of Flori-

da, he got the most votes on campus.

If Anderson ever has a drug problem, it will involve collecting money for penicillin shipments to Ethiopia. The brass at Florida never had to doctor his transcripts, but they might have been tempted. Otherwise, who's going to believe this guy?

"Character, character, character, character," Ditka said. If Anderson were any more upstanding, his feet wouldn't reach the ground.

ALL THAT WILL make for warm receptions on the banquet circuit. But what Ditka liked best about Anderson was

the way he keeps standing up when tacklers dive at his legs. If it weren't for that, no one would care how many hospital wards he visited.

"You're going to love the way he runs with the football," Ditka said. "He doesn't run around a whole lot of people. He runs through a lot. He can make them miss, but when it's time for impact, he's going to give most of it."

"He's a lot like the one we have right now." **WILBER MARSHALL** will vouch for that. Marshall was a Florida linebacker two years ago, and he and Anderson have spent many a practice knocking each other down. Marshall doesn't like to say anyone's as good as Walter Payton, but he says Anderson's probably faster.

"He's a very tough runner," Marshall says. "I guess nobody's got Walter's moves, but he likes to bounce off and go after making contact. He looks almost like a linebacker up top."

Anderson was compared with Payton even before he was drafted to follow in Payton's seemingly interminable footsteps.

TEAMMATES MADE THE comparison brazenly. They called him Sweetness at Florida and in high school, where he grew up in the Florida panhandle town of Graceville.

"But that would be tough to have here," Anderson said. "Better stick with Neal."

Anderson made the comparison hopefully. Before last season, he said, "There is one other player I try to pattern myself after, Walter Payton. I like to think I am the same type of runner — somebody able to run over a guy or right around him."

After the Bears drafted him, Anderson said, "He does so many things well on the football field, if you're a running back, you're going to look up to him."

The problem is, Payton is still doing those things. He called running backs coach Johnny Roland on draft day with a good-natured reminder that he wasn't ready to retire after 11 years. Roland joshed back that the Bears were trading him to Buffalo. But in all seriousness, Roland mentioned something about Payton wanting to gain 18,000

Continued Next Page

By
Kevin
Lamb



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Anderson

Continued From Page 5

yards. That's 3,140 yards away, probably more than two seasons.

WHAT'S ANDERSON GOING to do in the meantime? "Wait my turn," he said. "Not even Walter Payton can play football forever." Anderson made it sound more like a privilege than purgatory. In essence, he said, how many halfbacks get to learn from the master?

On the other hand, he didn't seem awed at the burden of carrying Payton's baton when Payton is ready to hand it off. The comparisons may not be so kind then. "That's like following Willie Mays or Mickey Mantle," Roland said. "I don't think I'd want to be the guy who followed Walter Payton."

While he's waiting, Anderson will get a chance to return kickoffs. Payton led the league in kickoff returns as a rookie. "I just want to play," Anderson said.

THE BEST WAY for a back-up halfback to play is as a pass-catching specialist. The Bears often used a third back on passing downs last year, and they're thinking of doing it more often this year. With wide receiver Dennis McKinnon injured, it would be easy to do.

Press-catching was Anderson's weakness most of his career. He still doesn't look natural at it, scout Rod Graves said, but he does it. He worked at it. Last season, his 25 catches more than doubled his career total, and Anderson said he dropped only one.

The Bears liked him enough that they might have taken Anderson even if they had traded for the 10th pick in the draft. It would have been a close call. They would have weighed Keith Byars' foot injury against his franchise-back potential. They would have considered the immediate help Ronnie Harmon could give them as a receiving specialist. Reggie Dupard would have been in the discussion, too.

WHEN ANDERSON MADE it to the 27th pick, the Bears' choice was easy. After 20 picks, they narrowed it down to Anderson, Dupard and wide receiver Tim McGee. Only Anderson made it to 27.

It was a surprise. Most mock drafts had him going in the top 10, at least no later than 12th. Denver coach Dan Reeves said the Broncos rated him sixth in the draft and told Ditka, "The rich get richer."

"We got lucky," Marshall said.

THAT, THEY DID. If Minnesota had spent the eighth pick on quarterback Chuck Long, as expected, instead of trading back in the round, Anderson probably would have gone to Detroit on the 12th pick. That's what the Vikings thought when they made the trade. They still wanted Long. They were surprised when Detroit took him.

Or if the Steelers had taken Keith Byars, as coach Chuck Noll said they would do with the ninth pick, Philadelphia may have taken Anderson 10th. With Byars available, the Eagles took him.

As the first round unfolded, it became clear teams were betting the depth of rookie running backs would carry them into the second round. The buying spree was on offensive linemen instead. Then, with four straight surprises, on picks 22 through 25, Anderson lasted longer than the Bears had thought possible.

THEY HAD PLENTY of opportunities to trade for a pick that would guarantee them Anderson. But it would have cost them choices later, from rounds three to seven. "We gambled and won," Tobin said. "Patience paid off."

Winners can do that. Before the draft, Tobin had said the Bears could be more conservative than in past years, "when we had to wheel and deal more often." Winners also can draft for an impending need two or three years away instead of wondering which bulging hole in the lineup to plug first.

"The cupboard's no longer bone dry, like it was four or five years ago," Ditka said. "We can afford to do what we wanted to do, and we did it."



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After Anderson, Bears Filled Needs

Since Washington cornerback Vestee Jackson was projected as a possible first-round draft choice and Illinois wide receiver David Williams was projected as a possible second-round choice, the Bears were happy to set them in the second and third rounds, respectively.

They didn't expect Neal Anderson to last 27 picks either. **PLAYER PERSONNEL DIRECTOR** Bill Tobin said he had "no idea" why they lasted. Personnel men usually say those things, but Tobin is a better personnel man than most, as the Bears' recent record will attest.



By
Don
Pierson

Make no mistake. The Bears don't think they have stolen Hall of Famers on the last pick of every round in this draft. "They aren't perfect players," said Tobin.

A lot of them do have a legitimate chance to make the team, however, and that is saying plenty.

"WE CAN'T EXPECT as many to make it as made it

last year," said Tobin. "We have a better team, it's a weaker draft, and we were drafting later."

There were 10 first-year players on the Super Bowl roster. Five were draft choices and five were free agents, including former Bear draft picks and USFL players Tom Thayer and Tim Wrightman.

After Anderson, here is a rundown on the choices.

NO. 2 — Jackson is an athlete comparable to former second-round cornerbacks Reggie Phillips and Mike Richardson, according to Tobin. He will make the competition interesting.

A product of Don James' well-coached Huskies, Jackson already has the endorsement of Bears' 11th-round pick Glen Koslowski of BYU, who called him the best defensive back he faced in college.

NO. 3 — Williams is a big (6-3) rangy athlete who caught more passes (186) the last two years than any other collegian. That production alone is worth a look.

Scout Jim Parmer said he has heard the rap that Williams had lapses of concentration, that he dropped balls he should have caught, and that he wasn't tough.

"I thought he caught most of what he should have caught and some he shouldn't have had the chance to catch," said Parmer. "I've seen him set hit where I thought there was no way he'd set up, and he got up."

NO. 4 — Oklahoma State tackle Paul Blair is a prospect who gained 50 pounds since high school and will challenge Tom Andrews and Andy Frederick for a backup job. Parmer said he could play guard or tackle.

NO. 5 — Oregon punt returner Lew Barnes has as much chance of making an immediate impact as anyone else, Anderson included. Coach Mike Ditka liked him because he saw what Louis Lipps did for Pittsburgh and then he

Continued Next Page

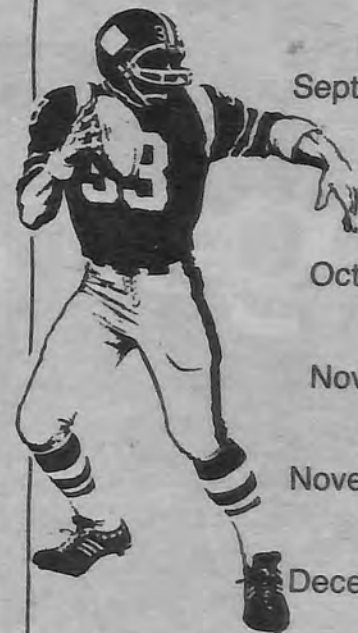


FIFTH-ROUND DRAFT choice Lew Barnes is a terror on punt returns. (Photo courtesy of University of Oregon)



WIDE RECEIVER GLEN Koslowski (7) lasted until the 11th round due to a knee injury sustained last season. (Photo courtesy of Brigham Young University)

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saw the Steelers draft another punt return specialist, Utah State's Erroll Tucker. The Bears aren't in the habit of drafting kick return specialists. It's about time. Although only 5-8, Barnes will take a stab at the receiver position, too, where competition will be a focal point of training camp.

NO. 6 — Tennessee running back Jeff Powell was a national class hurdler, not to be confused with former Tennessee world-class hurdler Willie Gault. Powell is fast and a possible projection as a wide receiver, although the scouts hope he sets a look at running back first.

NO. 7 — North Alabama strong safety Bruce Jones could provide depth where the Bears are thinnest. If Todd Bell doesn't return, Jones has a chance to make it despite a question on his speed.

NO. 8 — Kentucky cornerback Maurice Douglass is another possibility for strong safety if not corner. Scout Rod Graves said he is built like a fullback.

NO. 9 — Texas punter John Teltschik was too good to pass up at this point, even though he punts barefoot. He showed an ability to handle the Texas wind with a net aver-

age of 41.8 yards.

Although Tabin said the Bears weren't necessarily looking for competition for Maury Buford, Teltschik will provide it. There is no chance of his foot freezing before September.

NO. 10 — Kansas State free safety Barton Hundley was recommended by former Kansas State assistant coach Dave McGinnis, now the Bears' linebacker coach.

NO. 11 — Koslowski is an intriguing pick because scout Don Kins said he had a first or second-round grade until felled by knee surgery in November. As a freshman, Koslowski played with quarterback Jim McMahon. As a junior and senior, he was responsible for helping Robbie Bosco compile such impressive statistics.

Koslowski is a tough kid who will go anywhere for the ball. His motto is: "When the ball is in the air, I feel it's mine." If he recovers from the injury and can't make it at wide receiver, the Bears think he is tough enough to give it a try at safety. Gary Fencik made the same adjustment quite nicely.

"A darn good gamble," said Parmer. Super Bowl champions can make such gambles and Koslowski shares the feeling of most of his fellow draftees. "There's no other team I'd rather play for," he said.



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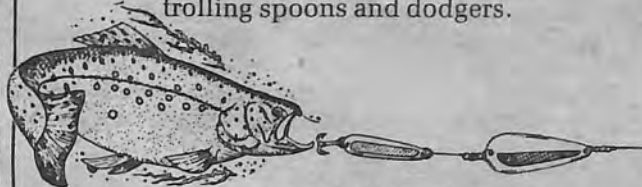
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The world champion Bears were built largely through the NFL draft with first-round picks ranging from #3 to #19 which isn't an unfavorable range. Quality talent is normally available with the early picks. It's when you pick 27th and still help your team that scouting really makes a difference.

That's why the 1986 draft reflects so well on the Bears' coaching and scouting staff. They did their homework and didn't panic. The braintrust rejected silly deals and was rejected by other teams when Todd Bell and Al Harris were made available. So they played the hand an 18-1 season dealt them and went to work.

THE FIRST THREE picks look solid. Neal Anderson, a 5-11, 210-lb. running back from Florida, was simply the best pick on the board at #27. He has good size and is a fine blocker. Anderson is bright, having been named to the academic All-Conference team. He's a leader with "character on top of character" according to Mike Ditka.

The number two pick was CB Vestee Jackson, 5-11, 198, from Washington. Jackson is an outstanding athlete, a long and triple jumper in college. He triple-jumped 51-3 and long-jumped 23 feet. Those qualities will help him at the corner against taller receivers. He does not possess blazing speed, but athletic ability frequently overcomes one deficiency.

Illinois wide receiver Dave Williams somehow drifted down to the third round where the Bears snagged him. Williams will give quarterback Jim McMahon a tall receiver for a change. Williams is 6-3, 187, and has those long arms QB's love to throw to. He knows how to get open and finds the openings in a zone. Williams is a crafty receiver who knows how to work back toward the QB to get open.

AT ILLINOIS LAST year, Williams accounted for over 1,000 yards receiving despite his lack of breakaway speed. He brings a major advantage to the pro game in that he played in Mike White's pass-oriented offense in the Big Ten.

The competition at wide receiver will be interesting due to Dennis McKinnon's injury. Ken Margerum in particular will have his stiffest challenge to survive as a Bear.

At running back, Thomas Sanders and Dennis Gentry will see a #1 draft pick at their position in camp. With Walter Payton getting closer to retirement every year, the Bears must place a big red circle around the running back slot as a position to be filled soon.

THE REMAINING TEAMS in the NFC Central did well in this year's draft. Tampa Bay took Auburn's Bo Jackson with the top pick, then selected four straight defensive players led by DB Roderick Jones. With Lee Roy



By
Dick
Gonski

Selmon retired and Hugh Green traded, the Bucs needed defensive help badly. Jackson figures to pair nicely with James Wilder.

Detroit took Iowa's Chuck Long to challenge Joe Ferguson and Eric Hipple. Long figures to spend half a season learning, then should get his shot at starting.

Green Bay also took a QB, BYU's Robbie Bosco, on the third round. The former Heisman Trophy candidate slumped in his senior year, but could prove to be a solid pick for the Pack. Green Bay also selected running back Ken Davis of TCU. Davis was booted off the team at mid-season for allegedly taking illegal payments from alumni

boosters. But he is a quality runner and all of Green Bay's payments will be legal.

COMING INTO THIS draft, the consensus around the league was that the Bears needed a CB as insurance after losing Leslie Frazier to a nasty knee injury in the Super Bowl, and a WR to fill in for the injured Dennis McKinnon. They got both in the first three rounds and picked up a quality running back too.

Credit must be given to Bill Tobin and to the Bears' coaching staff for a job well done. It isn't easy to improve a Super Bowl champion drafting last, but the Bears did it. That's the way the Pittsburgh Steelers and Dallas Cowboys used to operate. They never allowed excuses to get in their way. The Bears have managed to improve the quality of this team without sacrificing future draft picks or current veterans.

There must have been a temptation to go for broke and do something wild. After all, William Perry was a sensational selection last year as everybody else howled. Then the Bears went 18-1, won the Super Bowl, and became international celebrities in England and China. This is heady stuff! Surely a feeling of invincibility made its way into Lake Forest after all that.

The Bears must be commended for keeping their heads. Credit for that goes to Mr. Reality, Mike Ditka. He leads by example, especially in the attitude department. This 1986 Bear team will be confident, but not cocky. Ditka knows each opponent will turn it up a notch when they play the Bears this season.

Ditka has gathered the tools for defending the NFL crown the Bears wear today. Not a bad day's work.



SECOND-ROUND DRAFT choice Vestee Jackson checks out the equipment in the Bears' weight room. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)



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HEAD COACH MIKE Ditka (left) listens as Player Personnel Director Bill Tobin answers questions about first-round draft choice Neal Anderson. (Bear Report photo by Don Vitullo)

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Graceville, Fla. Proclaims Anderson One Of a Kind

By Wally Gullick
BEAR REPORT Staff

Today's All-American football player who puts as much emphasis on GPA, SAT and ACT, as he does on TD, INT or PAT, is a member of a fading breed, but luckily for the Bears extinction has not yet set in.

In an era where tests for drug abuse are more prevalent in the public eye than tests administered to the students in the classroom, it's a refreshing tale that almost rivals fantasy when you focus in on the story of Neal Anderson.

THINKING ANDERSON COULD realistically encore the acclaim of last year's top pick — William Perry, and enjoy the fantasy-like rookie campaign the Fridge basked in, will have to be a later chapter to this Neal Anderson story. Of course, trying to encore the love affair the city enjoyed with Perry might put this story out of the grasp of even the most imaginative Hollywood script writer.

However, in Neal Anderson, the Bears may very well have chosen the eventual heir apparent to the game's greatest player, Walter Payton.

Kept out of the media spotlight as a collegian because of the probation cloud that hovered over the University of Florida, Anderson never became the household name that players of similar abilities enjoyed. But slip him into a Bears' jersey with the number 40 on his back, and you could have Bear fans noting his likeness to Hall of Famer Gale Sayers.

"That's the kind of running back Neal is. A slashing runner with sprinter-like speed," claims Anderson's high school football coach, John "Sonny" Campbell. His rookie season as coach in '82 was highlighted by the presence of Anderson.

Centering his playbook around Anderson, Campbell watched as this multi-talented All-Stater scored 22 touchdowns while rushing for more than 1,200 yards. The single season touchdown mark is one that still stands at Graceville High School in Graceville, Florida.

"**THERE'S NO QUESTION** he was the greatest player I've ever coached, and he'll probably wind up being the greatest player I ever will coach," said Campbell. On the heels of Anderson, Campbell took Graceville to the third round of the Florida State playoffs with a 10-2 overall

record.

Nestled in the north central portion of Florida's panhandle, just south of the Alabama state line, Campbell's Graceville teams were soon being scouted by more than rival high school coaches as Anderson was fast becoming the worst kept secret in the deep south.

People like Bear Bryant and Charlie Pell began showing up in the stands to take a look at number 27. Anderson was making the job of winning for first-year coach Campbell easier than it was for him to make time for all the college scouts who began to pour into Graceville.

"**COACHES, SCOUTS, RECRUITERS**, you name it, they were in my office waiting for me in the morning and were there until late at night," recalls Campbell. He realized Anderson's value to the college recruiters escalated when the scouts took a peak at his grades which revealed a B+ average.

"I'd like to take credit for making him not only a natural athlete, but also being responsible for having him take pride and put forth so much dedication and effort into his school work too. That was part of his character. Character traits that were developed at home under the direction and guidance of his parents," says Campbell.

At home, Neal answered to mom and dad. Dorothy and Tommy Anderson encouraged him to partake in athletics, but with the stipulation that if the grades fell, sports would be forfeited.

"**WE PUT IT IN** his mind that education was first," said

Tommy Anderson, who will watch with pride when his son graduates from Florida on time with a B average. It's an accomplishment which will serve as the icing on a college career that reflected unparalleled work ethics, and a time consuming extracurricular schedule. That includes not just football, but active participation in fund raising activities for the March of Dimes.

"Whatever Neal did, he put forth his best effort, and he remained confident at all times that he would succeed," said Tommy. He recalls his son's reaction the first time he was approached by a young fan, who wanted his autograph, after a high school game.

"One day I'll be a superstar and I'll be signing lots of autographs," was Neal's response. Watching him perform in high school, and seeing him do what no other rival players could do, allowed me to believe that he would make it to the pros," recalled Tommy.

WHEN NEAL EMERGED as the first-round draft pick of the defending Super Bowl champion Bears, it made for an exciting day in Graceville. The headquarters for the celebration on Draft Day was the Anderson home.

"I was sitting down watching the coverage of the draft on television with Neal, but I wasn't sitting for long. When I heard the Bears picked him in the first round, I jumped up and began running through the house," said Tommy, whose wife Dorothy used the news as a dose of treatment to take her mind off the war she is waging against Hodg-

Continued Next Page



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Graceville

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kins Disease.

The day before the draft I had chemotherapy treatment, and on Draft Day I got another form of treatment by hearing the great news about Neal. We're all very excited over the fact that Neal was drafted by the top team in the league," said Dorothy. She is anxious for her son to team up again with former teammate and good friend Wilber Marshall, who was starring for Florida as a senior when Anderson was beginning to crack the Gator lineup as a sophomore.

"DRAFT DAY WAS one of the happiest days of my life," added Tommy, who admitted he was a bit surprised the Bears selected a running back. But when he gave the situation some thought, he drew a more favorable conclusion.

"I guess the Bears figure Walter Payton is beginning to get on in years a bit, and the need for a younger running back had come about," surmised Mr. Anderson. His

excitement reflects the entire community of Graceville, small town USA, with a population of just 2,500.

Dick Wheatley, the former principal of Graceville High, is now the chief administrator for Cottondale Elementary School in Cottondale, Florida. He cites Neal as one of the finest students he ever had the privilege to be associated with, and has followed his career with great interest.

"MORALLY, SPIRITUALLY, academically and as an athlete, Neal Anderson is top notch," noted Wheatley. He remembers the Bears' top pick as a soft-spoken generous person who never created problems, only solved them.

It's words like that which were showered upon Neal the Friday before the draft, when the town of Graceville presented the 21-year-old legend with the key to the city and staged a parade in his honor.

"Bear Mania has spread to Graceville," said Wheatley. He recalls the contingents of Graceville residents who journeyed to Gainesville, Florida and became Gator rooters while watching their hero star for Florida during his college career.

NOW THE TOWN is buzzing for Bear caps and schedules. Already fans are looking ahead to dates when the Bears journey to places like Atlanta, New Orleans and Tampa, cities within driving range for Graceville residents.

"It's not often a town of our size has the opportunity to get excited about something like this," said Wheatley, who doesn't anticipate the situation to repeat itself in the near future.

"I don't think they make too many Neal Anderson's. I've been trying to remember isolated incidents that best reflect Neal Anderson the person, and there are just too many. I can't pin any one situation down," says Wheatley.

CAMPBELL AGREES, recognizing Anderson as an individual that is as close to perfect as you're going to get.

"Sure, we may have some players come through here in the future with as much talent, but not with the overall character and maturity that Anderson carried himself with," noted Campbell. He personally retired Anderson's jersey number 27 at the recent Neal Anderson Day hosted by the community.

"He never got too big for this town. Whenever he could, he would make it back from Gainesville to Graceville to visit with me and the players. When he'd attend, we would have him on the sidelines. He was a great incentive and a great motivator for our players. The kids looked up to him as a hero," concluded Campbell.

From small town hero to the world champion Chicago Bears, Anderson's biggest test now awaits him. But the allied support he's blessed with in Graceville, and the personal will and education to succeed that he's driven by, prevents any reason for speculation over whether or not the future Neal has carved out for himself will be a successful one.



FIRST-ROUND DRAFT choice Neal Anderson knows how to dive for extra yardage. (Photo courtesy of University of Florida)



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Landry's Football Career Continues With Coaching

Ever since his teenage years, football has been a constant in the life of new Bears assistant coach Greg Landry.

Always a quarterback during his playing days, Landry grew up in the southeastern New Hampshire town of Nashua, where he achieved high school stardom.

IN THOSE DAYS the now-gray-haired Landry thought of football as fun, a pleasant diversion, a way to be with his friends and represent his school. As news of his exploits grew, it was becoming obvious to him that football would also be a vehicle for getting a college scholarship.

His ambition was to be a coach, and he knew that he needed collegiate credentials to reach that goal. College offers beckoned.

By
Michael
Haggerty



"I guess at that time I was a typical New Englander," he grins, "one who felt that the United States ended at the Hudson River."

"I VISITED MICHIGAN State and was very homesick. I visited the University of Pittsburgh and almost went there. I had a number of other offers, but it came down to my thinking that I'd probably be better off staying in New England."

He wound up accepting a scholarship from the University of Massachusetts (then located one rung below the "big-time" football schools), where he distinguished himself again. "But I really didn't think very much about playing professionally until my senior year," he says.

Landry had an outstanding final season and reaped a bevy of honors.

"I WAS INVITED down to the North-South Shrine Game in Miami," he recalls. "That gave me my first opportunity to compare my talents to those of some of the best players in the country."

"I played well in that game, so that gave me confidence. I told myself, 'Well, people have said a lot of nice things about you, but you don't know if it was because of the level of competition you've been playing.' That game in Miami gave me the confidence to think that, well, maybe there was truth to what people had been saying — that I'd be drafted high."

"Those people" were right. Landry, who had gone on to play well in the Coaches' All-American Game and Chicago's College All-Star Game, was chosen on the first round by the Detroit Lions, for whom he'd be a mainstay from 1968 through 1978.

"THE FIRST GAME I started in my pro career was the first game of my rookie season," he remembers. "Bill Munson, unbeknownst to me, had hurt his shoulder in the pre-game warmup. I was sitting in the locker room and just kinda chatting, you know, and Joe Schmidt came up to me."

"He said, 'Hey kid, you've got to play today.' So that was it. That was my notice. I was kinda stunned, but I went out and, like the first six or seven passes I threw were for completions. The first pass I threw, in fact, was for a touchdown."

"I told myself that this pro game was pretty easy," he laughs, "and then we got clobbered. I think it was 56 to 14 or something like that."

AFTER HIS DETROIT years (during which he earned a master's degree in sports administration at Wayne State), Landry realized, "I still wanted to coach. I felt the longer I played pro football then the more I could have input into coaching, no matter what the level."

He also tried a variety of off-season jobs and succeeded in virtually all of them, but in his heart he knew that football was the thing that pulled at him most. Landry spent the next three seasons at Baltimore. He was basically cast in a backup role and he became somewhat of a tutor to a young Bert Jones.

"Staying in football as a coach was becoming more and more of a logical move for me," Landry reflects. "I was working with Bert and I was listening to what the coaches were really saying. Not so much on the assignments themselves, but how the coaches were giving the assignments. I watched their techniques, how they interacted with players."

"I TALKED WITH the general manager, the assistant



GREG LANDRY GUIDED the Bears to victory in the 1984 regular season finale vs. the Lions. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

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THE REFRIGERETTES ENTERTAIN the audience at the Better Boys Foundation Kickoff Luncheon in April. (Bear Report photo by Don Vitullo)

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Eye surgeons are now performing an outpatient corrective procedure which can eliminate dependency on eyeglasses in the vast majority of people who are only able to see sharply up close.

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First developed in the Soviet Union where the first human operation was performed in 1973, the procedure was first done in the United States in 1978 and since then, some 65,000 operations have been performed here. In the entire U.S. experience there have been several cases of serious complication requiring surgical intervention though none has resulted in blindness. F.A.A. examiners accept good vision from radial keratotomy and so do local and federal law enforcement agencies, though the armed services have knowingly accepted only a few test candidates as yet.

The procedure, called radial keratotomy, is most helpful to adults 18 to 55 years old, who wish to free themselves of glasses for careers in the airlines, in law enforcement, and in fire protection, and for those motivated for personal reasons but for whom contact lenses have not worked.

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NFLPA Mackey Awards Banquet Set For June 29

For the 20th consecutive year, the National Football League Players Association will hold its Mackey Awards Banquet in Chicago to benefit the Better Boys Foundation.

This year's banquet will be held on Sunday, June 29, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Five members of the World Champion Chicago Bears will receive awards for their achievements on the field last season. They are Kevin Butler, Jim Covert, Richard Dent, Walter Payton, and Mike Singletary. A sixth (yet unnamed) Bear will receive the Jack Griffin Award for his service to the BBF. Many other NFL stars will also be honored.

THE BBF IS A non-profit social service agency uniquely equipped to meet the pressing needs of inner city youth and families. BBF's educational, cultural, and social programs give youth who are surrounded by violence, crime and unemployment a chance to expand their horizons and prepare for the positive aspects of life. This year, the BBF is celebrating its 25th year of service to the Lawndale community of Chicago.

"The main reason why we hold this banquet is to keep life as it is, to keep it going strong," says Payton. "We want to build better citizens, build better communities. That's what it's all about."

"By supporting this dinner, we can help a group of people who are committed to doing something very positive for the city of Chicago," adds safety Gary Fencik.

Tickets for this year's banquet are still available and cost \$350 each. Tables of ten are available for \$3,500. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by the law. For further information, call 312-427-4434.

Training Camp Set

Head coach Mike Ditka has scheduled the opening of training camp for July 15 at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. All veterans are scheduled to report by July 19.

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WALTER PAYTON ADDRESSES the audience at the Mackey Awards Kickoff Luncheon. (Bear Report photo by Don Vitullo)

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Greg Landry

Continued From Page 13

general manager. I was becoming more familiar with how they ran a pro football club. I played a lot in Baltimore because Bert was hurt a lot. I was still playing well. I still had the skills. Then Frank Kush came in and Frank let everybody go who was over the age of 24," smiles Landry wryly.

"That's when the USFL was starting up and George Allen called me up and I thought, gee, I'm going to get paid well to go to the new league under George, help some of the younger guys and learn a little bit more about the trade of coaching from one of the best."

That he did, in 1983-84, for Allen's Chicago/Arizona franchise. Allen was also the key to returning Landry to the NFL in the fall of '84 when the Bears' quarterbacking situation fell under the seemingly-constant assault of injuries.

HE STARTED FOR Chicago against his old team, the Lions, in Detroit, and he was a winner again in the Motor City. The 1985 season saw him coaching in Cleveland and he rejoined the Bears in the off-season to coach the quarterbacks and receivers.

"Football is probably more than anything else a way of life for me, because it's something I've been doing ever since I was about 15 years old. It's just been part of my life," he muses.

"You can do a lot of things — and I've experimented with a lot of opportunities — but football for me is something that I believe I'm good at. I know pro football's a business; I knew that the first time I got hurt in the pros. But I enjoy it. I enjoy helping young people. I'm really happy to have the opportunity to help other people. I played 17 years and now it's exciting for me to help others, like Bernie Kosar last year in Cleveland," he says.

"It's satisfying. I'm really happy to have the chance as a coach to help others achieve success. It's still football, and it's still satisfying."



Perfect Pitch

WALTER PAYTON THROWS out the first ball at Wrigley Field on Opening Day for the Cubs. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

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Bears' Schedule

The Bears will make at least five appearances on national television this season, beginning with their pre-season opener vs. the Cowboys on Sunday, Aug. 3. That contest will be held at London's Wembley Stadium, and will be broadcast live via NBC beginning at Noon CST.

On Aug. 23, the Bears' pre-season contest vs. the St. Louis Cardinals will be televised nationally via CBS, beginning at 8 p.m. CST. The Aug. 9 pre-season game at Pittsburgh is also being considered for national TV.

During the regular season, the Bears will make three appearances on ABC's Monday Night Football: Sept. 22 at Green Bay, Nov. 3 vs. the Rams at Soldier Field, and Dec. 21 at Detroit.

Following is the complete 1986 Bears' schedule:

PRE-SEASON

Sun., Aug. 3 vs. Dallas Cowboys at Wembley Stadium, London, England, Noon
Sat., Aug. 9 at Pittsburgh Steelers, 5 p.m.
Sat., Aug. 16 ST. LOUIS CARDINALS, 7 p.m.
Sat., Aug. 23 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS, 6 p.m.
Sat., Aug. 30 vs. Buffalo Bills at Notre Dame Stadium, Noon

REGULAR SEASON

Sun., Sept. 7 CLEVELAND BROWNS, Noon
Sun., Sept. 14 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES, Noon
Mon., Sept. 22 at Green Bay Packers, 8 p.m.
Sun., Sept. 28 at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon
Sun., Oct. 5 MINNESOTA VIKINGS, Noon
Sun., Oct. 12 at Houston Oilers, Noon
Sun., Oct. 19 at Minnesota Vikings, Noon
Sun., Oct. 26 DETROIT LIONS, Noon
Mon., Nov. 3 L.A. RAMS, 8 p.m.
Sun., Nov. 9 at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon
Sun., Nov. 16 at Atlanta Falcons, Noon
Sun., Nov. 23 GREEN BAY PACKERS, Noon
Sun., Nov. 30 PITTSBURGH STEELERS, Noon
Sun., Dec. 7 TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS, Noon
Mon., Dec. 15 at Detroit Lions, 8 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 21 at Dallas Cowboys, 3 p.m.
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BEAR REPORT welcomes all Letters to the Editor. Due to space limitations, it may be necessary to shorten letters to fill the space available. BEAR REPORT does not necessarily agree with the views stated in the letters we receive. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

Can Live Without Ryan

Dear Doug,

Thank you again for another great season of coverage and comments. Being away from Bear Land in '85 was tough but your paper again this season saved me.

I couldn't wait to get my copy each week. I felt like a kid with a new toy. I shared my paper with many fans here in Clearwater, and am happy to report two of them are now subscribers to your fine paper.

As a Bear fan, I can't find the words to say how happy I am about our Super Bowl season. Let's stay on top of the mountain.

Sadness is with us today because Buddy Ryan has left. But let's remember we were losers until our Super Bowl coach came in '82. We will stay winners not because of Buddy Ryan, but because of Mike Ditka. Period.

We may not be as awesome, but we will still be Monsters of the Midway. The players make the system go, not the coach.

Ryan was with us eight years and only the last two have we been awesome. Why? Because Mike & Co. went out and got the players to make it work. We have lost a great coach, but let's not think we can't win without him.

I would be more concerned if Ditka left than Ryan. I wish him the best (except against us) but he has a long, long road to cover before he reaches any playoffs like the Bears in seasons to come.

The Eagles' schedule in '86 is a real tough one. Two years in the playoffs — sure Buddy and said "Fridge" is a wasted draft choice. Buddy has a way of putting his foot in his mouth at times.

Best of luck to the BEAR REPORT in '86, my sixth year of subscribing to this great paper. Let's do it again. Can't remember when I enjoyed a season more.

Ken Mettler
Clearwater, FL

Cheap Shots A Disgrace

Dear Doug,

I have been a Bear fan for over 20 years and I truly love the Bears, but what I saw the Bears do in the Super Bowl made me ashamed to be a Bear fan. In the first half, I saw the Bears commit the most flagrant cheap-shot tactics I have ever seen (excepting the Raiders). But not only did they commit these atrocities, they did it in front of the officials who conveniently did not see it.

Example: 1st Quarter — blatant clip next to goal line. 2nd Quarter — several late hits on quarterback. 2nd half — Perry tackled Grogan and drove his helmet into Grogan's back while driving him into the ground — more late hits. I can accept the fact that

these were aggressive plays, but I cannot accept the fact that they were not called by the officials.

We have played hard, clean football all season so why do we have to play Raider-type football in the biggest game of our franchise's history? This was not Bear football. Does winning mean that much? I would rather lose 46-10 and know that I played a clean, hard game than to show the world and all of my fans that I considered winning more important than how I won.

So to the New England Patriots I much apologize for the Chicago Bears and the officials of Super Bowl XX. For you are a class team, and although you lost on the scoreboard, in my book you are the winners of Super Bowl XX. You played a clean, hard football game and that is the way the game should be played.

Sincerely,
Les Freeman
Rialto, CA

Frustration Ends

Dear Doug,

After all the years of frustration and false hope, the Chicago Bears are once again champions of the world. I have been waiting for this along with all true Bear fans for quite some time. It's a fantastic feeling for me to say I am a Chicago Bear fan. One who knows what being a Bear really means.

I have grown along with our team, and today the pride I have in our players, coaches, and the entire organization cannot be truly measured. Maybe coach Ditka said it best: "It was worth the wait."

Rick Conti
Medford, MA

Will Never Forget '85

Dear Editor,

While enclosing the check to extend my subscription, I'm moved to comment on the season of 1985. There is so much to say about the Bears and their fabulous season. I wake up in the middle of the night and watch them play via the VCR. I've taped all the nationally televised games in '85, about 9 games in all. When you win, you're a hot TV commodity.

What a magnificent team effort by the Bears of '85. Walter, "the fabulous," totally committed all year long, played with fire and passion, will remember this season all his life. It's a pity one cannot bottle his type of "medicine" and give it to all the future Bears.

Gary Fencik, the consummate defender, plays "center field" with the best of them. He continuously shuts down opponents' game plans time after time. What a coach he'd make some day. Hampton, a great story, leads by example. Richard Dent, a very offensive defender, occupying 2 to 3 blockers every play to keep him off their QB.

The selfless give-all Matt Suhey also deserved 1985. Mike Singletary, a total team player. He's the KGB of the defense because he's everywhere. He should get a lifetime Bear contract, player, coach, PR, etc. . . . Wilber Marshall, the Bears' sheriff of the future. He'll be much talked about along with the rest of the young Bears. They all deserved 1985.

I've been a Bear fan for a very long time. The magnetism of George Halas drew me to the team in the late '40s. My fanaticism got so bad that when they played the 1956 championship vs. the N.Y. Giants, I couldn't stand to hear them lose so I took refuge in a movie theater in Detroit where I lived at the time. It was different in 1963. I was confident about their chances so I enjoyed the championship game on TV.

George Halas' memory deserves 1985. It should be his lega-

cy. He hired Mike Ditka who got the team going in the right direction. People may not realize what a unique story George Halas is. He was the Chicago Bears for over 60 years. There are only a small number of people in recent world history that had influence over their single entity: team, corporation or country for that long a time. I can think of Connie Mack, Rockefeller, Haile Selassie and one or two others. James Michener should write his story.

Two years ago, I wrote the BEAR REPORT about Ditka's effect on the team and igniting the latest Bear fandom in the country. Well, I'm very happy to have lived in 1985.

Congratulations to all who love the Bears.

Joe Gans
Mission Viejo, CA

Sorry For Payton

Dear BEAR REPORT,

Thank you for the enjoyment the BEAR REPORT has given me this year. I'm happy to say I've ordered two more years. First of all, I have to congratulate the Chicago Bears. Second of all, my all-time favorite hero, Walter Payton, walked off as if he lost his best friend in the Super Bowl. I've been his fan for years. He is too great of a player not to score in that long-awaited game. He said it was just another big game, but nothing major. And last of all, the Bears should aim for a 19-0 "perfect" season.

Mike Smoier
Scottsdale, AZ

Kudos To Marshall, Thayer

Dear Doug,

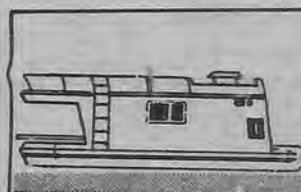
I'm writing for a couple of reasons. First of all, I'd like to compliment the performances of Wilber Marshall and Tom Thayer. Marshall did a great job filling in for Harris and he got to prove just what kind of a player he can be. I don't think Harris will be able to get it back if he returns next year. On the other hand, Thayer did a great job filling in for Kurt Becker even after a long USFL season.

I have been a Bear fan for eight years, and it seems funny that there are so many Bear fans now. A couple of years ago, the only Bear fan I knew was my dad.

Congratulations to the Bears and the BEAR REPORT! Keep it up.

Sincerely,
Dick Cerruti
Novato, CA

Continued Next Page



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More Letters

Continued Page 18

Bad News Following Bowl

Dear Editor,

As a Bear fan of 46 years, I rejoice in their recent successes. I believed that they were a very good team, but an NFL Championship — WOW!!!!!! A dream fulfilled.

We hardly had time to savor the victory when two events occurred which cast a heavy shadow of doubt over their chances of repeating in 1986. First, Leslie Frazier is lost, probably for the entire season. This forces the Bears to play either Phillips or Taylor — both with limited experience — or an untested rookie.

The second event has been well documented — Buddy Ryan leaves to go to the Eagles. Doug Buffone, Don Pierson, et al have made light of the loss of Ryan. If they truly believe their own words, they are whistling past the graveyard. Anyone who has played organized ball, on almost any level, knows that a coach can have a powerful psychological effect on his players. The "players make the difference" says Mr. Pierson. Very profound. American football is the ultimate team sport — 11 men working in unison. The players may be the ship in the water, but the coach is the man at the wheel and a ship without guidance goes nowhere.

Certainly the Bears' defense is made up of extremely talented players — great size, speed, quickness, and intelligence; but there are several NFL teams with personnel at or near the athletic ability of the Bears. Why aren't they as effective as the Bears? They lack the system, and more importantly, the total belief in and commitment to that system. The Bears' defense, to a man, believed

what Ryan taught them. They knew that if they executed the game plan, they could not be beaten. Ryan was more than their coach. He was their teacher, father confessor, and friend.

Enter Mr. Vince Tobin. I wouldn't be in his shoes for all the money and fame in the world, for no matter what he does, his every move will be compared to Buddy Ryan.

My first reaction was, "Vince who?" What are his credentials? I'll bet Hampton, Singletary, and Fencik asked the same question. Will he scrap the most effective and revolutionary defense to come down the pike in decades — the "46"? If so, will the

players be willing and able to effectively switch to the new (old) system? I doubt if Vince Tobin's ego will allow him to try to adopt another man's brainchild. He has his own ideas I'm sure. Good-by "46." Hello 4-3-4 or 3-4-4, which is what the Philadelphia Stars of the USFL played. Good-by number one defense. Hello number five to eight defense. Good-by to the all-out, "hell-bent-for-leather," aggressive style that can hold a Super Bowl opponent to minus yards for an entire half. Hello to the "bend-don't-break" style which is so familiar around the league. Going back to the safe and sane defenses will cost the Bears 100 more points on defense next year which the offense will have to make up. McMahon and his merry band will get the job done most of the time, but you can kiss the dream of an undefeated season good-by.

In short, the Bears lost much more than a starting cornerback and a defensive coordinator. In Frazier they lost their best and most experienced cornerback. Look for opposing offenses to pick on his green replacement. In Ryan they lost the strong, charismatic leadership that inspired the arrogant confidence which was the signature of the Bears' defense. Worst of all, they have lost the "46" system which separated their defense from all the rest and made them the talk of the league.

I hope I'm wrong. I hope that the players accept Vince Tobin completely. I hope he comes up with a defensive scheme that puts the "46" to shame. I hope the Bears win it all. BUT I DOUBT IT.

Sincerely,
Richard C. Zimmermann
Lafayette, LA

Historical Team

Dear Doug:

The Chicago Bears of 1985 have now taken their place in history. I am confident that this team will be remembered as one of the most dominant of recent years.

When we consider the fact that in 1983 the Bears were not an outstanding team, and that in just two short years they became Super Bowl champions, it is almost like the impossible dream come true.

All the many years of frustrations are now only a memory. The new Bears have ended all the suffering and brought joy, thrills galore, respect and now we are America's team.

Mike Ditka proved his ability as a great coach, and the Bear team is made up of so many heroes that today many are household names.

The future looks bright and I wish you continued success with your fine publication, and I look forward to each new issue. All the best for 1986.

Willard Zierold
South Amana, IA

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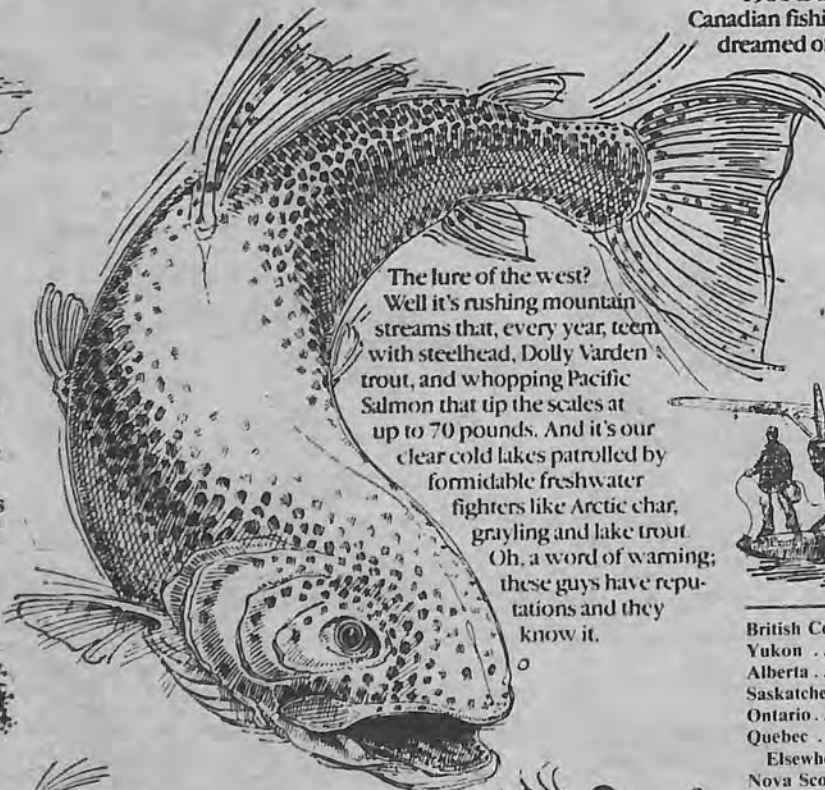
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